Other
*177 resources have been introduced through economic channels. Over time,
167 outsiders have been attracted into the area. Men have come to seek gold, missionaries to save souls, and currently, government programs have been introduced to develop Guyanese citizens. Each of these lenses of influence has served to introduce new resources to the local population, linking the Upper Barama area with regional transportation and communication systems and regional economic markets.

Early Gold Activities

175 At the end of the Nineteenth Century, gold was discovered in the
*177 North West District. Prospectors, or porknockers as they are locally
[135] called, came to seek their fortune in the bush. Principally, these were Afro-Guyanese men recruited from peasant villages along the coast (Smith 1969). Alluvial gold has been worked on the Barama and its tributaries at least since 1896 (Bishop 1941). From 1898 to 1912, the height of the early mining activities, the total gold production from the Barama area amounted to 99,169 ounces (Bishop 1941:20). This production was not exclusively from the Barama River drainage. Access to placer deposits on the Cuyuni River was gained from the Upper Barama which is more navigable than the Cuyuni.

There is no record of the number of men involved in these gold activities. Porknockers often came as partners in groups of two or three. They would work for a number of months and then return to Georgetown. Bishop estimates that in 1937-38 there were about 500 men working gold in the entire Barama River drainage basin. However,